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SACRAMENTO—The Older Californian Traffic Safety (OCTS) Task Force will expand its educational efforts in 2007-08 as an important assist to seniors who want to drive more years, yet be ready for the time when physical or mental problems may force them to stop driving. Highway Patrol Commissioner Mike Brown, OCTS Task Force chair, said an Office of Traffic Safety grant awarded to the CHP “will be instrumental in allowing us to publicize the programs available to help seniors extend their driving years.” The grant, titled *Seniors Safe and Mobile*, totals \$1,057,757.

Organizations that partner with the task force have developed major impact programs that demonstrate how good health, exercise and flexibility can add more years behind the wheel, and offer a hands-on demonstration of how to “customize” a vehicle to fit the driver. Another tool provides an instructive self-assessment of physical and mental well-being that identifies problems which may impair driving.

The American Society on Aging, AARP, the American Occupational Therapy Association, the Automobile Club of Southern California, and California State Automobile Association—all members of the OCTS Task Force-- have made these programs possible. One is called Road to Driving Wellness, offered in a classroom setting; CarFit is conducted in a parking lot, where driver and vehicle go to various “fitting” stations; and Roadwise Review is a compact disk used on the home computer. Commissioner Brown said the CHP also “continues to show the film *The Golden Road*, produced by 21st Century Insurance for public television and subsequently made available for educational purposes.

“These ventures will be promoted with grant funds,” the commissioner said, “and we will also expand our efforts to help seniors realize the importance of preparing for the time they stop driving. We understand that nobody wants to see that day come, but a great many seniors will outlive their driving ability. The key is acknowledgment, not denial.” To facilitate that process the task force plans to release an instructional video offering guidance for those attempting to help at-risk seniors cease driving and accept alternative transportation.